



**Ursula von der Leyen**  
*President of the European Commission*

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## Mission letter

Brussels, 1 December 2019

**Thierry Breton**

### **Commissioner for Internal Market**

Dear Thierry,

Earlier this year, the people of Europe made their voices heard in record numbers at the European elections. They presented us with a mission to be decisive and ambitious on the big issues of our time that are shaping the future of our society, economy and planet.

Changes in climate, digital technologies and geopolitics are already having a profound effect on the lives of Europeans. We are witnessing major shifts all the way from global power structures to local politics. While these transformations may be different in nature, we must show the same ambition and determination in our response. What we do now will determine what kind of world our children live in and will define Europe's place in the world.

Our job as the European Commission will be to lead, to grasp the opportunities and to tackle the challenges that these changes present, working hand in hand with people from across Europe and with the governments, parliaments and institutions that serve them.

This is the guiding principle behind my Political Guidelines for the next European Commission 2019-2024, which I presented to the European Parliament on 16 July 2019. I outlined six headline ambitions on which I want the European Commission's work to focus. These priorities are interlocking and are part of the same picture. In this spirit, I have put together a College in which we will all work, decide and deliver together.

## An open and inclusive way of working

This approach reflects the open, inclusive and cooperative way of working that I will instil throughout the Commission, as well as in our relationships with others.

### *The College: One team*

The European Commission functions on the **principle of collegiality**. This means we are one team: we all work together following a whole-of-government approach, we all have our say, we all decide collectively and we all take ownership of what is agreed.

To help us deliver on our ambitions and commitments, **I will empower eight Vice-Presidents** to steer and coordinate thematic Commissioners' Groups on each of the Commission's priorities. They will be supported in this role by the Secretariat-General. All Commissioners will be in one or more Groups. The Commissioner for Budget and Administration will report directly to me.

Of the eight Vice-Presidents, the **three Executive Vice-Presidents** will have a dual function. As Vice-Presidents, they will lead a Commissioners' Group and be supported by the Secretariat-General. In addition, they will also manage a policy area and have a Directorate-General under their authority for this part of their job. One of the three Executives, First Vice-President Timmermans, will chair the College in my absence.

The High Representative/Vice-President will support me in coordinating the external dimension of all Commissioners' work. To ensure our external action becomes more strategic and coherent, it will be systematically discussed and decided on by the College. To support this, all services and Cabinets will prepare the external aspects of College meetings on a weekly basis, mirroring the process already in place for interinstitutional relations. This should also better align the internal and external aspects of our work. This will be a **'Geopolitical Commission'**.

I believe that we need to **speak and listen more to one another**, starting from within the Commission. College meetings will be places of open and honest discussion. As President I will set the agenda, but all College decisions will be taken collectively. In line with our commitment to fully digitalise the Commission and the need to use resources conscientiously, College meetings will be paperless and digital.

Each Commissioner will ensure the delivery of the **United Nations Sustainable Development Goals** within their policy area. The College as a whole will be responsible for the overall implementation of the Goals.

### *Interinstitutional relations and better policy making*

Along with our close relations with the Council, I want to strengthen the Commission's **special partnership with the European Parliament**. This priority must cut through the work of each Member of the College, starting with myself.

I will expect you to ensure the European Parliament is regularly briefed, notably before major events and at key stages of international negotiations. In light of my support for a right of initiative for the Parliament, you should work closely with the relevant Committees, and be active and present during the preparation of resolutions requesting that the Commission legislate.

The more we build a consensus when designing policy, the quicker it can become law and make a difference to people's lives. This is why we need an **open and cooperative approach throughout the legislative process**, from policy design to final agreement. I will expect you to attend all political negotiations, known as trilogue meetings, with the other institutions.

We need to ensure that regulation is targeted, easy to comply with and does not add unnecessary regulatory burdens. The Commission must always have the leeway to act where needed. At the same time, we must send a clear signal to citizens that **our policies and proposals deliver and make life easier** for people and for businesses.

In this spirit, the Commission will develop a new instrument to deliver on a '**One In, One Out**' principle. Every legislative proposal creating new burdens should relieve people and businesses of an equivalent existing burden at EU level in the same policy area. We will also work with Member States to ensure that, when transposing EU legislation, they do not add unnecessary administrative burdens.

Proposals must be evidence based, widely consulted upon and subject to an impact assessment reviewed by the independent Regulatory Scrutiny Board. You will ensure that they respect the principles of **proportionality and subsidiarity** and show the clear benefit of European action.

Given that any legislation is only as good as its implementation, I want you to **focus on the application and enforcement of EU law** within your field. You should provide support and continuous guidance to Member States on implementation, and be ready to take swift action if EU law is breached.

### *Bringing Europe closer to home*

I want to **strengthen the links between people and the institutions that serve them**, to narrow the gap between expectation and reality and to communicate about what Europe is doing.

We must engage with all Europeans, not just those who live in the capitals or are knowledgeable about the European Union. I will expect you to **visit every Member State within the first half of our mandate** at the latest. You should meet regularly with national parliaments and take part in Citizens' Dialogues across our Union, notably as part of the Conference on the Future of Europe.

A stronger relationship with citizens starts with building trust and confidence. I will insist on the **highest levels of transparency and ethics** for the College as a whole. There can be no room for doubt about our behaviour or our integrity. The Code of Conduct for Commissioners sets out the standards and the rules to follow.

You will ensure budgetary spending represents value for taxpayers and follows the principles of sound financial management.

### *Making the most of our potential*

The College which takes office today is the **most gender-balanced to date**. It makes good on my pledge to put together a Commission that is more representative and draws on all of our potential. This is a good start, but there is plenty more work to be done.

I expect you to **draw on all of Europe's talents** when it comes to setting up your own Cabinets. That means striking an appropriate balance in terms of gender, experience and geography.

The Commission should also lead by example when it comes to ensuring better representation and a diversity of voices in our public life. With this in mind, all public events organised by the Commission should aim to feature gender-balanced panels and a broad range of perspectives from across Europe.

## Your mission

**I would like to entrust you with the role of Commissioner for the Internal Market.**

Europe's industry provides a livelihood for millions, and is a driver of jobs, growth and competitiveness. Our companies are able to thrive because of Europe's single market, the largest in the world of its kind and one of our greatest assets. By removing barriers and opening access for firms to a large and competitive market, it drives Europe's innovation and competitiveness and makes us a desired trading partner for countries around the world.

This digital transition is helping us to redesign our economy, make our industry more competitive and find new solutions to societal challenges. We have to make the most of the opportunities this creates while preserving the high privacy, security, safety and ethical standards that Europeans expect.

### *The digital economy and society*

Your task for the next five years is to put in place the right framework to allow Europe to make the most of the digital transition, while ensuring that our enduring values are respected as new technologies develop.

- I want you to contribute to the work on **enhancing Europe's technological sovereignty**. This means investing in the next frontier of technologies, such as blockchain, high-performance computing, algorithms, and data-sharing and data-usage tools. It also means jointly defining standards for 5G networks and new-generation technologies.

- As part of this, you will lead the work on a coordinated European approach on **artificial intelligence**. To facilitate this you will develop a **European strategy on data**. You will also lead the work on the new **Digital Services Act**.
- I want you to contribute to our work on **preventing and countering disinformation** and fake information online, while preserving freedom of expression, freedom of the press and media pluralism.
- I want you to focus on building a real **single market for cybersecurity**, notably looking at certification, implementing rules on security of network and information systems, rapid emergency response strategies and other relevant areas. You should lead the work to build a **joint Cyber Unit** to better protect ourselves.
- As part of a transition that supports people, I want you to contribute to an updated **Digital Education Action Plan**. This should focus on digital literacy and equipping young people and adults with the skills they need for life and work in the digital age.

### *A future-ready European industry and single market*

Your task over the next five years will be to guarantee the smooth functioning of the single market in line with the social market approach, ensuring it adapts to the modern economy and to new business models. This will allow our industry, small businesses and entrepreneurs to grow, scale up and employ more people.

- I want you to contribute to a comprehensive **long-term strategy for Europe's industrial future**. This should cover all aspects that affect industry and its competitiveness, from investment and public procurement to trade, skills, innovation and supporting small and medium-sized businesses (SMEs).
- All parts of European industry should contribute fully to the objective of a climate-neutral economy by 2050. You should ensure that our new **Circular Economy Action Plan** feeds into to our overall industrial strategy.
- I want you to contribute to the new **SME strategy** to help them scale up and expand, including through improved access to finance. As part of this, you will appoint a Commission **SME Envoy**.
- You will be responsible for the smooth **day-to-day functioning of the single market**. I want you to focus on the implementation and enforcement of rules at the European, national, regional and local levels. You should also look at the remaining barriers relating to goods and services and help remove any artificial distinctions between new digital markets and more established markets.
- You should establish a **level playing field** throughout the single market and contribute to the work addressing the distortive effects of foreign subsidies, in particular in relation to public procurement.

- I want you to take a close look at our **intellectual property** regime to ensure that it is coherent, is fit for the digital age and supports our competitiveness.
- I also want you to lead the Commission's reflections on issues such as Europe's technological sovereignty in key value chains, including in the defence and space sectors, common standards and future trends.

### *Defence industry and space*

The European defence industry generates a total turnover of €100 billion per year, and space policy is one of our Union's most valuable and strategic assets. More cooperation in defence spending and space will have a positive spillover effect on the European economy.

- You will be responsible for the implementation and oversight of the **European Defence Fund**. In doing so, I want you to encourage collaborative projects with as much cross-border participation by small and medium-sized enterprises as possible.
- I want you to focus on building an **open and competitive European defence equipment market** and enforcing EU procurement rules on defence.
- I want you lead on the implementation of the Action Plan on **Military Mobility**, in close cooperation with the Commissioner for Transport.
- You should foster a **strong and innovative space industry**, maintaining the EU's autonomous, reliable and cost-effective access to space.
- As part of this, you will implement the future Space Programme, covering **Galileo and EGNOS**, the EU's global and regional satellite navigation systems and **Copernicus**, the EU's Earth observation programme.
- You should explore ways in which we can make the most of our assets to deliver on climate objectives, including the use of Copernicus to monitor CO<sub>2</sub> emissions.
- I would like you to focus on improving the crucial **link between space and defence and security**. You should support the Member States in increasing the uptake of the Galileo Public Regulated Service, which can be used by governments for emergency services, peacekeeping operations and crisis management.
- You will work closely with the High Representative/ Vice-President to ensure **coherence** between your work on defence industry and the Common Security and Defence Policy.

As a rule, you will work under the guidance of the Executive Vice-President for a Europe fit for the Digital Age. You will be supported in your work by a new Directorate-General for Defence Industry and Space, as well as the Directorate-General for Communications Networks, Content and Technology and the Directorate-General for Internal Market, Industry, Entrepreneurship and SMEs.

## The way forward

The mission outlined above is not exhaustive or prescriptive. Other opportunities and challenges will no doubt appear over the course of the next five years. On all of these issues, I will ask you to work closely with me, and with other Members of the College.

Once there is more clarity, we should be ready to pave the way for an ambitious and strategic partnership with the United Kingdom.

I look forward to working closely together at what is an exciting and testing time for our Union. You can of course count on my full personal and political support throughout our mandate.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Ursula v. der Leyen', written in a cursive style.

Dr. Ursula von der Leyen

President of the European Commission

